

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 14814

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH, US

SUBJ: RESIDUAL U.S. PRESENCE IN THAILAND

1. FORMER FONMIN THANAT KHOMAN TOLD ME TODAY THAT HE WAS WORRIED OVER THE CASUAL AND APPARENTLY ILL-THOUGHT-OUT MANNER IN WHICH THE RTG WAS HANDLING THE QUESTION OF MAINTAINING CLOSE SECURITY TIES WITH THE U.S. FOLLOWING THE CLOSING OF BASES IN THAILAND. THANAT SAID THAT THE THAI WERE NORMALLY RATHER ASTUTE IN THE HANDLING OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BUT THAT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO BE WEARING BLINKERS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGE TO THAILAND AS WELL AS TO THE U.S. OF HAVING SOME AMERICAN MILITARY FACILITIES REMAIN IN THAILAND AFTER MARCH 1976.

2. I STATED THAT SEVERAL EFFORTS TO ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE OF THIS SORT HAD BEEN UNAVAILING BUT THAT I ANTICIPATED THAT DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE MAINTENANCE OF VARIOUS FACILITIES IN TMZS COUNTRY WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE. I ASKED DR. THANAT WHETHER HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WAS SOME GIVE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WITH REGARD TO BASES PER SE. THANAT REPLIED THAT LARGE-SCALE U.S. INSTALLATIONS WERE INAPPROPRIATE TO THE PRESENT TREND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BUT THAT IT WAS FOOLISH OF THE RTG NOT TO COMMENCE TO PLAN FOR SOME CONTINUED

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U.S. ACTIVITY. DR. THANAT MENTIONED THAT VISTS BY U.S.

AIRCRAFT TO THAI BASES MIGHT WELL BE IN ORDER AS USEFUL POLITICAL COUNTERWEIGHT IN THE FUTURE. I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO SEE SOME SMALL FACILITIES MAINTAINED HERE AND THANAT SAID HE WAS SURE IT DID. I POINTED OUT THAT ON A QUESTION LIKE THE MOVEMENT OF U.S. AIRCRAFT INTO A THAI BASE IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN VARIOUS RADIO, RADAR AND NAVIGATIONAL AIDS. I SAID THAT I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS AT THIS TIME WITH REGARD TO MY GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER, BUT THAT A CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL.

3. THANAT SAID THAT HE WAS SPEAKING TOTALLY UNOFFICIALLY BUT THAT AS A THAI PATRIOT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO SEE SOMETHING WORKED OUT WHICH WOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO THAILAND AS WELL AS TO HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THIS MATTER PRIVATELY WITH UNNAMED PERSONS AND BE IN TOUCH WITH ME SHORTLY.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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